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BOOK REVIEWS

WHAT IS ART? BY JOHN C. VAN DYKE. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, Publishers. Price \$1.00.

One need go no further than the title of this interesting book to awaken many a heated discussion.

Since time immemorial this question has proved to be the Red Flag thrown in the face of artists and critics; one of those Eternal Problems which will forever interest the human mind because each age and each nation desires to supply its own definition—a definition which Mr. Van Dyke does not attempt to make arbitrary. He rather invites the controversy, and succeeds in making it so attractive that few will lay down his book until the hundred and fifty pages have been eagerly scanned.

Whether we agree or disagree with his point of view is of little importance. He has made us think and thus fulfilled his purpose, since one of his strongest pleas is for self-reliance in art criticism and the cultivation of our powers of discernment.

In the preface he says: "I have tried to build up, or at least uphold, certain established principles, and I trust the reader will recognize that there is argument here, not only for art as art, but for art as an expression of life." He then goes on to demonstrate that "art, strictly speaking, is not the thing said but the manner of saying it," and that while "great thoughts of themselves will not make great art, they will not prevent it." Nor has the subject anything to do with its excellence. "Art does not lie in the model. * * * It lies in the way you see and feel and paint," and he insists that if America is ever to possess great art, our artists must see and feel as Americans.

Professor Van Dyke's criticisms are all based on sound esthetics. One realizes that he is not only an able teacher, but a profound scholar, and although he does not make the statement in so many words, the summing up of his book is that art is the genius of a nation expressed through its literature, painting, sculpture, music or architecture, and

that the greatest art is the expression, through these mediums, of the greatest minds.

ONE HUNDRED MASTERPIECES OF SCULPTURE. BY G. F. HILL. John Lane Company, New York, Publishers. Price \$4.00. Postage 20 cents.

Although the author clearly states that his book is merely an illustrated catalogue, "first and last a picture book," no one can read his "Introduction" of 71 pages and not find much that is delightfully new and suggestive. He possesses a decidedly original manner of viewing things and a very clear method of describing them, together with great discernment of true merit in the artists whose work he reproduces.

Beginning with Greek art of the sixth century, B. C., he ends his hundred masterpieces with seven reproductions of statues by Michelangelo. Too much praise can not be given his selection of works to be included in a list which could only have been made by one possessing a broad catholicity of taste and an unerring instinct for all that is best in the art of the past. To all students of art this book can be heartily recommended.

THE FURNISHING OF A MODEST HOME. BY FRED HAMILTON DANIELS, with an introduction by HENRY TURNER BAILEY. The Davis Press, Worcester, Mass., Publishers. Price \$1.00.

This timely book must prove of untold value to those who desire to surround themselves with beautiful furnishings. The problem with which it deals is one which confronts all, and the solution it presents is both practical and logical.

Lavish and unwise expenditure, frequently seen even in the homes of the moderately well to do, bear evidence to the need of such a book, which gives a wealth of helpful suggestion to all makers of homes, but especially to those who have little to expend and who must depend on good taste in the selection of moderate-priced materials rather than the purchasing power of money.